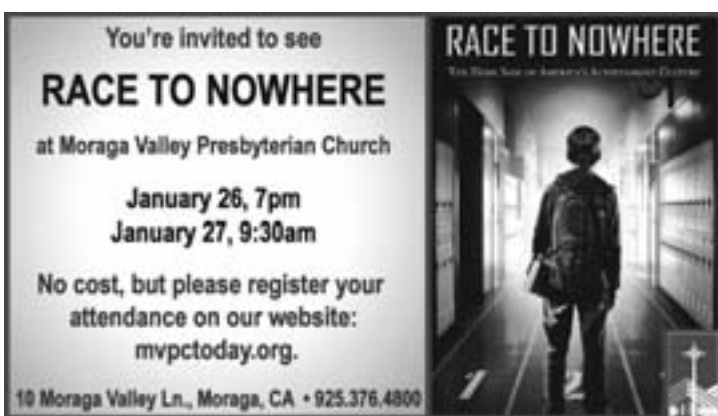


Acalanes High School • Bentley School • Burton Valley • Camino Pablo • Campolindo • Contra Costa Jewish Day School • Del Rey • Donald L. Rheem • Glorietta • Happy Valley • Joaquin Moraga

Lamorinda Schools

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You're invited to see
RACE TO NOWHERE
at Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church
January 26, 7pm
January 27, 9:30am
No cost, but please register your attendance on our website:
mvpcctoday.org.
10 Moraga Valley Ln., Moraga, CA • 925.376.4800

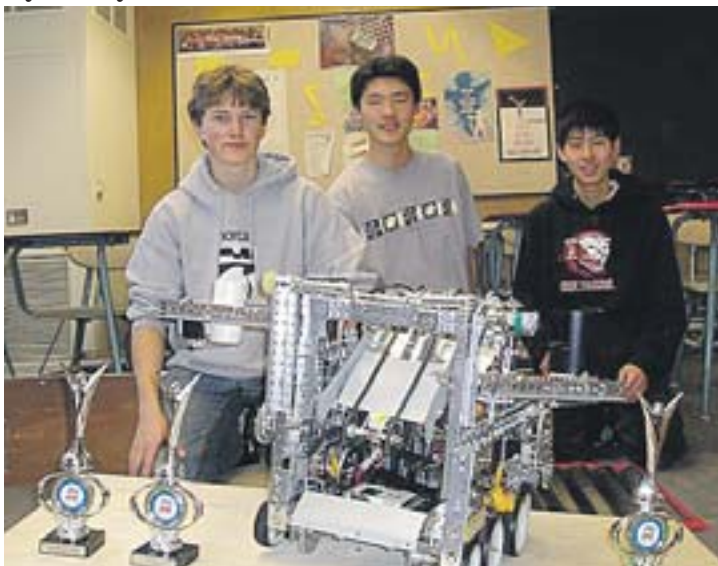
Submit stories
to **schooldesk**
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weekly.com

SCHOOL CALENDAR	
Acalanes Union High School District Board Room AUHSD Office 1212 Pleasant Hill Rd., Lafayette Wednesday, February 2, 7:30pm	Lafayette School District LAFSD Office 3477 School Street, Lafayette Wednesday, February 9, 7pm
Orinda Union School District OUSD Office 8 Altarinda Road, Orinda Monday, February 14, 4pm	Moraga School District Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Auditorium 1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga Tuesday, February 8, at 7:30pm

Registration for Lafayette students entering Kindergarten for the 2011-2012 school year will take place January 25-26; Orinda's registration will be February 7-10; and in Moraga, registration will be March 3-4.

Robotics Team puts Heart and Soul into Work

By Cathy Dausman



Tsvetkov, Wang and Chiao behind "Sputnik" and trophies Photo Cathy Dausman

It's twice the size of a toaster oven, has eight wheels, more than 20 gears and weighs about 30 pounds. It can climb a ramp, balance on a see saw, pick up and sort plastic piping and turn on a dime. It's powered by a 12-volt Lego motor and laptop computer, but the real power behind this mechanical wonder is the team of Campolindo High School juniors Austin Chiao, Maks Tsvetkov and Sammie Wang. The trio comprises the upper class Robotics team they named Tsvetkov e Droozie (Russian for "Tsvetkov and friends"). They named the robot Sputnik.

The students, along with sponsor math and physics teacher Nita Madra, are members of the Campolindo High School Robotics club. They compete in FIRST Robotics competitions, a nationwide science and math program developed in 1989 by Segueway inventor Dean Kamen. According to its website <http://www.usfirst.org/> more than 51,000 high school stu-

dents on 2,070 teams across the U.S. are involved. The robots and their student-creators compete against other FIRST robots to complete timed tasks within a 12 by 12 foot arena.

Campolindo is currently the only school within the Acalanes Union High School District to have a Robotics club. Campolindo also has a second team, comprised of sophomores Laura Gustafson, Ryan Morelli, and Matthew Stickle. Now in its fifth year, the club was formed when Madra attended a summer FIRST workshop hosted by the NASA Ames Research Center.

On a recent Friday afternoon, as the school empties for the weekend, Chiao, Tsvetkov and Wang gather in room D-9 to refine their robot's skills. Atop interlocking sponge rubber mats on the floor they place a ramp, a see-saw, a PVC pipe dispenser and receptacle. They boot up a laptop programmed in C++ language and grab a video game controller. Sputnik wheels,

whirrs and comes to life.

After building their robot in the fall, the team attended area competitions. Paired with another robot, the robot alliance earned points for successfully completing tasks in the best two of three rounds. The club has earned several awards, including the Winning Alliance and the PTC Design Award. Most recently they won the Rockwell Collins Innovate Award (the club's second), the second most prestigious award. They strive to earn the top Inspire Award. On December 19th, they won the Northern California Championship Tournament, making them lottery-eligible for a slot at the FIRST Robotics Championship in St. Louis, MO in April.

Madra says these students are "the most organized and focused" group she's seen come out of the club. So focused, she says, that she sometimes has to remind them to eat.

"It's addicting. It's fun," says Wang, but just try to pin them down on their time investment. Cautions Tsvetkov: "don't ask." Biomedical Engineering or Biology seem likely college tracks.

Chiao, Tsvetkov and Wang hope to mentor a similar middle school program later this year. They've come so far, Tsvetkov stresses, only "because of the Parent's Club [which provides funding], Ms. Kitchens, Ms. Madra and Campolindo High School. Principal Carol Kitchens returns the compliment: "Max, Sammie and Austin possess three qualities that have made their team successful: intelligence, a strong work ethic and the ability to follow through." This robot team has plenty of heart.

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- Lafayette's Business Person of the Year
- Take the Body You Have; Make it the Body You Want

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Family Focus

One More New Year's Resolution

By Margie Ryerson, MFT

You may be busy following through with your New Year's resolutions right now (or postponing them like some of us). When we make a New Year's resolution we often think of trying to accomplish something concrete such as losing weight, exercising regularly, or saving more money. I'd like to urge you to consider a different goal, for your own sake as well as your family's, and that is to consider how well you treat yourself emotionally. I see individuals who consistently give of their time and energy to others, who are devoted parents, spouses, children to aging parents, and overall good people, but who fail to give themselves adequate emotional support.

Many people in our community have high expectations for themselves. While it is important to aim high, it is also important to reconcile what is possible and what is not. Some individuals struggle with feelings of inadequacy or inferiority simply because they don't give themselves enough credit or because their expectations for themselves are too high. They may be quick to find fault with themselves, but very slow to embrace the idea of "good job," or "good for me," or "I really admire these qualities in myself." Sometimes they learned as children that it was being conceited or boastful to think highly of themselves. But quietly thinking we are good people in many ways is not at all the same as bragging to others or showing off.

One former client was a successful professional in her field. She had a loving husband, a bright well-behaved child, good health and financial security. "Ellen" had a binge-eating problem and constantly weighed fifteen pounds more than her goal weight. The root

of her problem, however, wasn't her inability to control her eating or her obsession with her weight. Rather, she had a head full of negative thoughts about herself. She grew up in a family where her mother had been very demanding and quick to criticize. Ellen admired her mother, an attractive woman and an accomplished musician. Early on, she internalized her mother's messages that she wasn't pretty enough, smart enough, popular enough, and so on. Ellen grew up feeling that she was a huge disappointment to her mother, and she continued to find fault with herself long after her mother's death.

Ellen's challenge in therapy was to change the focus from her fixation on her weight and overeating to her underlying feelings about her mother and herself. She needed to recognize the hurt and anger she experienced as a child, and how her earlier perceptions and experiences continued to affect her self-concept. Eventually, as Ellen gained insight and increased feelings of worth, she was able to consciously practice treating herself well emotionally.

Frequently, personal dissatisfaction also extends to others, especially to members of one's family. A person who has negative feelings about himself (or herself) often tends to project these feelings onto those around him. He may be more short-tempered and critical of his spouse and children. He may try to take too much control of family members and situations in ways that provoke resentment and alienation. His attitudes and behavior not only make his life less satisfying but they create rifts in his closest relationships. And, as we saw in Ellen's case, a parent's attitudes and actions often have a profound effect on his children's self-esteem.

If you aren't treating yourself well enough emotionally, it is essential to recognize the consequences this can have on your children and family. Children model themselves after their parents, both positively and negatively. When I work with a highly self-critical teen or young adult, often one or both parents in the family are also very demanding of themselves. It is important to turn around self-disparaging messages so that you can acknowledge all the positive efforts you make and the admirable qualities you possess. An old book that is still popular, *How to Be Your Own Best Friend* by Mildred Newman and Bernard Berkowitz, is a wonderful guide for treating yourself with the same kindness and care you extend to others. If you don't feel quite "good enough," make it a priority for the New Year to give yourself the emotional support you deserve.



Margie Ryerson, MFT, is a marriage and family therapist in Orinda and Walnut Creek. Contact her at 925-376-9323 or margierye@yahoo.com. She is also available for parenting consultation.

Youth Ink 2011

A middle-school writing contest to support literary arts

Submitted by Lisa Rodriguez

The Orinda Junior Women's Club (Orinda Juniors) is pleased to announce details for Youth Ink 2011, the annual creative writing contest open to all sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade students who live or attend school in Orinda. The Youth Ink 2011 theme, But if You Really Knew Me, was chosen because it encourages highly personal writing and lends well to open style choice.

Organizers say the first rule is - you can write about anything you like: Real or imaginary. Ask yourself: "What am I like when I am just me? How am I different from who my friends and peers think I am? Do I have a dark side? Am I afraid of it? Or, am I really sweet underneath and don't want others to find out? Am I really who they think I am? Hey, what is everyone else hiding?" There is no

limit to your imagination, just remember to have fun, whatever you write about, and we will enjoy reading it too.

"We can't wait to see how Orinda's talented youth writers will approach this year's intriguing theme," said Molly Griffin-Wilson, president of Orinda Juniors.

Generous co-sponsors of Youth Ink 2011, including The Orinda Association and The Orinda Community Foundation, have made it possible to provide impressive prizes:

- \$250 for 1st place, \$125 for 2nd place, \$75 for 3rd place
- 10 honorable mention gift certificates worth \$25 at Orinda Books

A panel of four local professional writers, including reporters and best-selling novelists, will evaluate submissions and choose winners.

The judges' names will be shared when the winners are announced at an awards ceremony at the Orinda Public Library on Thursday, April 28, 2011, at 6:00 p.m.

Youth Ink 2011 submissions will be accepted on an ongoing basis but must be hand-delivered to a designated school representative or postmarked by Feb. 18, 2011 and mailed to Orinda Junior Women's Club, Post Office Box 40, Orinda, CA 94563 in order to be considered for an award. Youth Ink 2011 submission forms are available through the administrative offices and English departments at Orinda Intermediate School, the Orinda Public Library, St. Perpetua School, Orinda Academy, Bentley School, Saklan Valley School, Athenian School and Julia Morgan School for Girls or online at www.orindajuniors.org.

Lamorinda Weekly

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